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The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM

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DEAR MEMBER,

The question which this News-Letter attempts to answer is whether there is a specifically Christian concern with the peace and, if there is, what is its nature.

THE PREVENTION OF WAR

It is plainly a Christian obligation to do everything humanly possible to prevent another world war. Common sense tells us that war is an insanity, and motives of common humanity impel us to fight with all our strength against the hideous waste and illimitable suffering of war. In all this there is nothing peculiarly Christian. In the Christian scale of values, indeed, suffering is not the greatest evil, and there are forms of peace that may be worse even than war. But war is so violent a disruption of human fellowship, and so profound a frustration of the ministries of compassion and goodwill and of the advancement of the physical, cultural and spiritual growth of the human person, through which we seek to serve God on earth, that we must contend unrelentingly against an outrageous evil which thwarts God's purpose for mankind.

But while Christianity lays on us the moral obligation to do all in our power to avert war, it offers no direct guidance about the way to achieve it. The choice of measures has to be arrived at by the exercise of our rational judgment. It depends on the right assessment of a host of complex factors and of the strength of the living forces which will take hold of any decision that is reached and wrest it in one direction or another, in ways which may be quite contrary to the intentions of the authors. In the capacity to judge these matters rightly Christians as such have no superiority over others.

The possibility cannot be excluded that provocation to another war may come from some other quarter than Germany. But it is in Germany that the belief in the splendour and sublimity of war has struck deepest and widest roots. There is evidence that some Germans are already thinking in terms of the next war. They are convinced that Germany nearly won the first world war, came still nearer to winning the second, and must assuredly win the third. The immediate problem is to make it impossible for Germany to start another war.

The views put forward in a flood of books, pamphlets and articles about what should be done with Germany are legion. But they tend to fall into two main classes according as they are based on one or other of two different diagnoses of the problem.

The one diagnosis, while it does not deny the historical importance of Prussian militarism and Nazism, finds the deeper origins of the war in wider, more general causes. The tendency to aggression is universal.

The predisposing cause of Germany's disturbance of the peace is the failure of the western world to find a solution of the economic problems of a technical society. Insoluble economic problems drove the Germans to desperation and made them the easy prey of Hitler. Those who incline to this view lay the main emphasis on finding a remedy for the maladies common to western society as a whole. As Commander King-Hall writes, "Germany is the boil on the back of the European neck, and whilst applying suitable local treatment to the boil, we must also do something to eradicate the poison which breaks out via the boil."

The other diagnosis, of which Lord Vansittart is the outstanding champion, insists that, however large a measure of truth there may be in what has just been stated, the fundamental problem is Germany. It is the German outlook and the German behaviour that are a standing menace to the peace of Europe. A false view of life has become enshrined in a tradition, and the miseducation of successive generations has implanted it deeply in the national mind. Even if the lust for domination is active only in a minority, there is a fatal docility in the German nature which allows the whole nation to become the dupes of evil leadership. Whether there are some good Germans is quite irrelevant; they are at the best only a minority and their political influence is insignificant. The nation as such is incapable of a normal nationalism and its abuse of nationality is a peril to all other nations. Consequently, the only thing to be done is to deprive Germany of the capacity to make war for as long a period as may be necessary to bring about a fundamental change in disposition and outlook.

Both views can be supported by a wealth of evidence and argument. Nothing would be gained by adding individual opinion about the proportions in which the truth in each ought to be mixed as a guide to the determination of policy.

How does Christianity affect our judgment of these issues? It is certainly true, as Miss Barbara Ward said in the recent broadcast discussion, that the Christian cannot accept the view that sin, or any particular brand of it, is confined to one race or nation. This knowledge ought to save us from the arrogance and self-righteousness in judging others by which men are often betrayed into disastrous mistakes.

On the other hand, there is nothing in Christianity which rules out in advance the possibility that Lord Vansittart's case against the Germans may not be true in fact. What the Germans *are*, the ideas by which their minds are ruled, the nature and degree of their responsibility for the war are questions of historical and psychological fact. There are no *Christian* grounds for preferring one conclusion to another. A kindlier view of the German character and behaviour is not necessarily more Christian than a more pessimistic one. In this sphere of fact, the sole Christian concern is to know the truth.

To be wrong in *either* direction about the facts may defeat the strongest determination to avert war. Those who advocate repressive measures are in danger of forgetting that the energies of life are untamable and endlessly persistent. To hold a man down against his will is too exhausting for the man on the top to be continued indefinitely. Arrangements so obnoxious to seventy million Germans that they are

determined to be rid of them at all costs cannot last. Those who claim to be realists are often quite blind to fundamental realities.

In an article in *The Economist* a few weeks ago,[1] which attracted a good deal of attention and provoked some violent reactions, it was vigorously maintained that the crucial question is not what kind of peace the Germans deserve, but what kind of peace the peoples of the United Nations will be prepared to enforce ten, fifteen or twenty years hence. The peace must be severe, but severe within these inexorable limits.

From such indications as have been allowed to transpire of what is in the minds of the leaders of the United Nations, *The Economist* is afraid that we are heading straight for the danger against which it warns us. In very emphatic language it urged that the treaty that appears to be contemplated, "far from banishing the fear of war, makes its return a certainty. . . . Inevitable war is being built into its very foundations."

Almost every one will agree that Germany must be completely disarmed and its capacity for making war subjected to the strictest control. But if it is really intended that Germany should be deprived of a third of its area and of its main industrial resources in both the east and the west, conditions will be created which all Germans must regard as intolerable and which they will never rest until they change. From the point of view of preventing war, the question, as *The Economist* rightly insists, is not whether the Germans deserve such a fate or not, but whether the arrangement will work. If it does not, war is the inevitable end.

Repressive measures imposed from without are by themselves quite useless as a means of preventing war. Unless an arrangement can be made which the German people have an interest in maintaining, and unless their willing co-operation in the working of an international order can in the end be obtained, peace cannot be preserved.

It is just as possible, on the other hand, that failure to prevent war may result from the action of those who refuse to distinguish between their desires and stubborn reality, and who build their plans for the future on the insecure foundation of the presence of liberal forces in Germany which may not, in fact, be powerful enough to control the political situation. Those who speak and write about a democratic or socialist Germany too often evade the fundamental question whether the necessary basis for such a development exists and, if not, what period of time is required for it to become a solid reality. Failure to diagnose the depth and malignity of the corruption of the German consciousness through long-continued miseducation may lead directly to the catastrophe which it is hoped to avert.

Large sections of Christian and pacifist opinion in this country and America seem to be in danger of a wrong approach to the problem of Germany. The attitude underlying many discussions appears to be in effect: "We must take a Christian attitude towards Germany, and it is therefore incumbent on us to believe that the German state of mind and behaviour are not as bad as Lord Vansittart makes out."

[1] The editorial article appeared on August 12th, and provoked a vigorous controversy which found expression in correspondence published in the ensuing weeks. The editorial view was restated in a second article on September 30th.

In so far as Lord Vansittart is mistaken, the mistakes ought certainly to be pointed out. But this ought to be done in the interest of truth, and not at all because it makes it easier to take a Christian attitude to the Germans. Christians ought to be under no illusions about the dimensions to which evil can grow. The Christian attitude, in contrast with that which has just been stated, surely is : " Things *may* be every bit as bad as Lord Vansittart supposes and, if they are, we must reckon with them in our public policy. This does not, however, diminish in any way our obligation to act towards Germany as Christians."

REDEMPTION

The discussion of the prevention of war has shown that a purely negative and repressive policy takes us nowhere. Peace can be achieved only through a constructive purpose.

This leads us to the fundamentally Christian conception of redemption, a great Christian archetype, in which is implied a constructive approach to the tasks of life. It was necessary to start with the more negative conception of the prevention of war, because so long as men's minds are obsessed by the fear of further German aggression they are closed to proposals for redemptive and creative action. Those whose uppermost feelings at the present time are a humane detestation of the barbarism of war and just indignation against the wanton infliction of untold suffering and misery on mankind, need to be assured that, if we differ from their policies, it is not because we are less determined than they are that every necessary measure should be taken to curb the forces of lawlessness and inhumanity, but because we are convinced that these measure alone are not enough.

Before considering what a redemptive purpose involves, we may glance at one or two other ideas bearing on the treatment of Germany.

First, there is the question of punishment. In principle, punishment is not only compatible with a redemptive purpose, but may be an essential part of it. That there must be punishment of war-criminals is generally agreed ; some of the problems connected with its execution may engage our attention in a later News-Letter. But when we come to the punishment of the crimes of a *nation* we are on different ground. The extent of national responsibility for the actions of those in authority is not easy to define, more particularly where modern techniques give those in power unrestricted control over public opinion. When we talk of punishing the German nation as a whole, over and above defeat in war and its inevitable consequences, we are in danger of using words to which we can give no concrete meaning.

The term punishment has little intelligible meaning in relation to the conditions which are likely to prevail in Germany at the end of the war. Large areas of its principal cities have already been obliterated, and the process of destruction will be accelerated by the acquisition of air fields on the borders of Germany and in Germany itself. Where the invading armies come defended towns and villages will be reduced to rubble, as they have been in Normandy. Millions of people are already homeless and the number will rapidly increase. The Germans have announced that they will engage in a remorseless guerilla war, and it

will be necessary for the invading armies to defend themselves by severe reprisals. We may soon be facing the complete breakdown in Germany of all ordered and civilized life. The question that will then face us is not the infliction of further punishment, but how to preserve the minimum of order and prevent Europe from falling into total chaos.

Again, take the idea of justice. The article in *The Economist* deliberately leaves aside moral considerations and for its immediate purpose restricts the discussion to the single question of what will work. But even so, it is compelled to recognize that in the matter of enforcing the treaty of peace one of the powerful influences to be reckoned with is liberal opinion, which is averse to what appears to be unjust or harsh. The Churches in America and in this country have insisted emphatically that what we must seek is a just and durable peace.

But when we begin to ask what constitutes a just peace, the difficulty of the problem appals us. Justice presupposes a community in which certain obligations are acknowledged and certain rules are recognized. Is it not precisely the crime of Germany that it has repudiated all obligations to the community of nations and publicly proclaimed that might is the only right? All nations have been guilty of an unscrupulous use of power to further their selfish interests. But the wrong which Germany has committed against western civilization is that it has elevated what has hitherto been regarded as a failure to live up to acknowledged standards into a positive principle of action. The life of Europe has been dragged down to the level of the jungle. If man is essentially, as Spengler asserted and many believe, a beast of prey, the only thing to be done is for the victims of an attack, when they get the chance, to draw the teeth and claws of the monster and render him innocuous. That is how many feel to-day, and the return from where we are to civilized relations between the nations will be a long and laborious ascent.

There is, indeed, one point at which those who hold a totally different view of man can begin at once to act in accordance with the conception of impartial justice. That principle will not allow us to write off the consequences of certain policies for the simple reason that only Germans are affected by them, as the Germans have acted in regard to the Jews. There are obligations which we owe to human beings as such, and in respect of these all men deserve equal consideration.

Fundamental as this is, it will not give us much aid in striking a balance in a host of practical questions between what is due to the Germans and to the peoples that have been their victims. Where the existence and future of nations are involved our fumbling notions of justice reveal their inadequacy as a yard-stick. We shall have to invoke some other principle than that of desert and proportionate reward or penalty, if we are to deal successfully with the problems of the peace.

But besides distributive justice, which is concerned with deserts and claims, there is another kind of justice, the understanding of which we owe to Christianity. It may be described as redemptive or creative justice. It is justice to the living and changeable. It is concerned less

with the past or the present than with the future. It regards men not as they are, but as they might become.

The distinction between Nazis and Germans may amount to little as regards the past; it can hardly be denied that, whatever the reasons, the German people have stood behind Hitler. But in regard to the future the distinction is of the utmost importance. With Nazism we can make no terms. But the German people have given gifts to the world without which we should be immeasurably poorer, and still have a contribution which we cannot afford to do without. Their co-operation is indispensable for the restoration of Europe.

Mr. Roosevelt said in a recent speech: "I should be false to the very foundations of my religious and political convictions if I should ever relinquish the hope—and even the faith—that in all peoples, without exception, there live some instinct for truth, some attraction toward justice and some passion for peace—buried as they may be, in the German case, under a brutal regime."

No attitude towards the Germans deserves the name of Christian that does not eagerly desire that these suppressed instincts should again find free expression, and that the German people, emancipated from the falsehoods that have poisoned their minds, should be restored to full and equal membership of the community of nations.

The Prime Minister has stated recently that the war is becoming less and less an ideological war. That may be true as far as political ideologies are concerned. But no one has stated with greater conviction than he has the fundamental differences between the Nazi way of life and that in which the peoples of the British Commonwealth believe. Unless such conceptions as the principle of toleration, the acknowledgement of certain basic human rights, the conviction that force is no argument and that truth can never be the sole possession of a single group or party, which have found partial embodiment in the western democracies, can be made to prevail over the forces contrary to them, a relapse into barbarism will be inevitable. Just as Abraham Lincoln perceived that the government of the United States could not endure permanently, half slave and half free, so the principles of the commonwealth and of the totalitarian State cannot continue to survive side by side. The one must sooner or later displace the other.

The only real victory—because it is a victory over the Nazi idea—is to win the German people to a genuine belief, which they have hitherto entirely lacked, in what may be called the good neighbour policy between States. The German writer, F. W. Foerster, in his *Europe and the German Question*,[1] which is one of the severest indictments of the German outlook and policy since Bismarck that has ever been penned, shows that there have been tendencies in German thought strongly opposed to aggressive nationalism, though they have been almost completely submerged in recent times. The crushing defeat of the intoxicating hopes of world dominion to which the German nation has for long surrendered itself may encourage a return to these healthier modes of thought. The *reductio ad absurdum* is a convincing form of argument, and it may be the historical rôle of the Germans to have

[1] Allen and Unwin, 16s.

demonstrated to themselves and to the world the self-defeating nature of unrestrained nationalism.

But if the only thing that gives meaning to the war and justifies its sacrifices is the triumph of the idea of co-operation and toleration over a predatory nationalism, and if the participation of the Germans in its realization is indispensable, we must make certain that the conditions of the peace are not such as make the conversion of the German mind impossible. However severe the penalty Germany must pay, the conditions imposed must not be such as to deprive its people of a tolerable future. Measures prompted by national power politics on the part of the United Nations can only have the effect of galvanizing German nationalism into fresh life. The ultimate aim of a European and world commonwealth must determine our policy from the start, or all that matters will be lost. The task to which we must address ourselves is so to provide for security as not to imperil the larger aim.

To refrain from actions which will defeat our constructive purpose is the first necessity. The second is to show by our example the things in which we believe—to demonstrate our political faith by our works. We cannot think seriously about the redemption of Germany without discovering the need of the redemption of ourselves.

One of our members, who is in a position to observe what is going on at fairly close range, writes: "To grasp this formidable nettle, to tackle this grim task, we have ourselves to find far greater springs of hope and confidence than we generally touch. We have to bring to Germany immediate contact with the living springs of repentance and righteousness. One sometimes thinks that a part of the tragedy resides in the fact that we are strong enough to conquer in arms, but not sure enough to see through our own puzzlements."

The necessary condition of the redemption of Germany, and consequently of successful peace-making, is the religious renewal of a passionate, unquenchable and infectious faith and hope, devotion to truth and duty, human sympathy and pity, and the leavening of public life with these personal virtues. There is no evading the religious demand for a conversion and purification of our own minds and hearts. This has to be combined on the political plane with a thorough analysis of the economic, social, historical and psychological causes of the present situation. Only by means of this knowledge can a redemptive purpose for *society* be made effective.

Where does our consideration of the relation of Christianity to the political problems of peace-making leave us? The effect of a Christian approach to these questions seems to be to sharpen the oppositions. It will not allow us to be content with easy solutions by ignoring or treating lightly essential factors in the total context. A friend, on whom responsibility for dealing with these matters in an official capacity presses heavily, says in a letter: "Christianity does not make political action any easier. On the contrary it makes it more difficult by throwing into clearer relief the tensions and conflicts involved. It is none the worse for that."

While Christianity deepens the tension, it provides its own antidote against despair. It frankly faces the fact that there is nothing in us

that can redeem and save others. Every effort to reform others or to take a creative attitude to our environment must appear on reflection unwarranted presumption. Christianity delivers us from this taint by its message of a divine aggression. What redeems is not anything in us, but something in which we *participate*. The redeeming power is the divine truth, goodness and love which have broken into the world and are always present to work in and through us as we surrender our lives to their control. If what we accomplish depends less on what we do or are than on what we worship, we can in quiet confidence offer daily to God the tiny part which we can play in influencing opinion in the true direction. If it is really true that " I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," the possibilities of the future have to be measured not by our power but his.

HUGH LISTER

Major H. E. J. Lister, who was killed in action a few weeks ago on the western front at the age of forty-three, was one of those on whom many of us had counted most for leadership in the post-war world. He was one of the most remarkable and most lovable of the men I have known. Striking as were the things that he had already done, his friends felt that he had in him potentialities that had still to be revealed. Yet essential as he seemed, there is an air of inevitability in his final sacrifice. It is the expression of what was most characteristic and deepest in him. One had the sense, even at the time, that this is what he deliberately chose when he joined up at the outbreak of the war and was given a commission in the Welsh Guards.

When he came to the Eton Mission at Hackney Wick in 1935, he was not only peculiarly well equipped for every kind of service to the community, but prepared by circumstances in his immediate past for a life of action and self-sacrifice. After taking the mechanical sciences tripos at Cambridge, he worked as an engineer for several years on the Great Western Railway. Then he decided to be ordained and, after a year at Cuddesdon, took a curacy at Poplar, followed by work for students as a secretary of the Student Christian Movement. He contracted tuberculosis and was obliged to rest for four years in a sanatorium, but after a complete cure he emerged to study psychology for a year at London University.

He worked with me for a few months in the early stages of the preparations for the Conference on Church, Community and State held at Oxford in 1937. The arrangement was that he should have at least his evenings free for Hackney Wick. But his heart was there, and when the increasing demands of the two responsibilities compelled a choice between them it was clear that Hackney Wick must come first.

Miss Cameron, who tells the story of his work there, is the founder of the Lincoln People's Service Club, which was in communication with Hugh Lister and those associated with him in Hackney Wick.

Yours sincerely,

HUGH LISTER AND HACKNEY WICK

By ALICE CAMERON

When Hugh Lister decided to devote his pent-up energy of mind and body to the service of the people of Hackney Wick, he realized, before he had been long in the Eton Mission, that the congregation of the Church, like that of so many in London, consisted almost entirely of women and children ; in fact, the bulk of the men of the neighbourhood were not being reached by the clergy, or, indeed, by any Christian influence sufficient to affect their lives. This discovery, of course, had been made by hundreds of parish and mission clergy before him. The very people who, in a sense, matter most in the life of the community—the working men, citizens and fathers of families—are in many parts of London completely divorced from the Churches and are even ashamed to be connected with them. Hugh Lister set himself to discover his own solution. He had no preconceived plan or theory. He used to quote Cromwell's saying : " He goes farthest who does not know where he is going." He determined first to " learn the language " of the locality—to understand the point of view of the average man and boy who worked in the factories and docks. Such a policy is not to be confused with that of the " hearty " parson of whom Doctor Johnson disapproved. Lister really learned to identify himself with the workers' outlook, so that the time came when he knew " instinctively " how to explain things without seeming " soft " or " pansy," and how to give them just the encouragement or the shock that they needed in forms they understood. One secret of his success in this respect was that he loved their society and enjoyed being regarded as one of themselves.

One of the ways in which he gained " this freedom " was by running a Working Men's Club with a wet canteen on the lower floors of his house, the house which he took after leaving the mission. The upper storeys were used as a trades union office and as rooms in which he put up homeless lads while he found them suitable jobs. After a time this Club was given up, having served its turn, and he took another house which had formerly been a café, and devoted himself and it chiefly to trades union branch activity.

His reasons for this are worthy of study. There were two, which converged. His knowledge of and intercourse with the local workers showed him that they were suffering from exceptionally low wages and long hours, and that these conditions, together with heavy and, in many cases, repulsive forms of labour produced an attitude of cynical despair and helpless resentment—relieved, it is true, by flashes of indomitable Cockney humanity and humour. He set himself, therefore, to find out, first, the best way to improve such conditions here and now. After interviews with managers in the capacity of " a priest of the Church of England " had drawn blank, and after similar efforts to appeal to shareholders had been unsuccessful, he proceeded to try the method of trades unionism by joining a handful of men who were trying to organize one of the " sweated " factories in the Wick. He was welcomed by them and very soon became their chairman and leader. He found that,

although often unsuccessful, this method did there and then give the best results in better wages and hours and in the relief of grievances; but it was as an answer to his second problem, that of introducing Christianity to the workers, that he found trades union activity most surprisingly valuable.

To many people, whether Conservative or Left Wing in their views, the idea of trades unionism as a *praeparatio evangelicae* will seem fantastic if not profane. From the point of view of the outsider trades unions usually seem either selfish and sectional or hidebound and unprogressive. To the ordinary worker at the bench trades unionism may make an appeal first as a means of obtaining justice for himself; but it very soon brings a claim on his time and effort to obtain justice for others, even at the sacrifice of self-interest. Its activities do, in fact, constitute a training in democratic co-operation among the members. Its ideals and standards are those of brotherhood, loyalty to one's mates, perseverance and courage. One has only to glance at the monthly magazines of the unions to find these virtues in their practical form inculcated from cover to cover.

Hugh Lister might have been content to appreciate all this as a spectator if the local factories had been well organized and the neighbourhood provided with flourishing branches. But Hackney Wick was one of those outlying districts where the vicious circle prevailed which makes trades unions particularly hard to organize just where they are most needed. It was customary for the managements of many firms to dismiss on various pretexts any of their men who began to enrol their mates in a union, and this discouraged others from attempting it. Moreover, the running of a branch, the treatment of grievances, the opening of negotiations with the management, all needed experience and trained capacity and the confidence that springs from them, while the enrolment of "raw material" demands faith and understanding of its latent power to develop intelligent citizenship. All these are usually wanting in the very wilderness in which they are most needed. It is true that trades unions pay their full-time organizers to form and nurse such struggling branches; but in the short run at least the expenditure of time and energy does not always seem worth while, when there are many other claims on the officials' time. This was why Hugh Lister felt that for him at this particular time trades union activity was the best way of at once helping his people to improve their economic conditions and of showing them, in an unpretentious way, the power of Christianity in action. By putting at the disposal of the struggling little group his terrific energy (he worked sixteen hours a day and took no time for leisure and very little time for meals and sleep), his gifts as a speaker, outdoors and in, and of a pamphleteer in bulletins and leaflets which are masterpieces in their way, and his powers of leadership and human understanding, he swept them along on a wave of enthusiasm which transformed a weak branch into one of the strongest in London.

But if his contribution had been merely that of his own capacities, stimulating and effective as they were in obtaining material success, he would have failed in much of his task of giving the Christian message as far as it could be given to the men of Hackney Wick.

What he had the genius to do was to adopt and share the trades union spirit at its best, and having taken its inspiration to charge it with all his own resources of faith and love. "Before I met Hugh," said one of the leading members, "I was just a nominal trades unionist. I learnt from him to have a faith in what unionism can do by brotherhood." He had the gift which is called that of inspiring others, but which meant in his case also being inspired by them. He helped them, too, in a unique manner by, as it were, living out situations and making moral decisions before their eyes, just as Oxford tutors often train their pupils by doing their own thinking aloud. Though, of course, in both instances there are reserves in the background, the listener is let into the secrets of a personality or mind richer and more powerful than his own, and his own ways of living are insensibly enriched. Hugh could do this because, for one thing, he started from their own world, which he had made his own—tough and primitive as it might seem, but always at grips with stark necessities ; and for another, because he was honest and humble enough with himself to be simple.

A trades union organizer related how he had been impressed by Hugh's treatment of members who had "let them down" through weakness. He was never angry or contemptuous of them, but could understand and explain just why they had given in, and was able to talk to them and encourage them to rise up and stand again on their own feet. All this took place in a setting of friendship with innumerable individuals and groups. He knew the names of hundreds of men, and each of them as an individual.

He never forced the religious note, though he was always ready to talk about it. Everyone knew that he drew power from the religious life which he never paraded or concealed.

As many as ten or a dozen of the men usually joined him when he went to Church on Sundays, and a large number took part in a weekly meeting for Bible study or for prayer that was held in the kitchen in a quite informal and unconventional way. Once, in the middle of such a meeting, the door was opened by the returning members of a darts team to announce that they had won their match. "Jolly good! Now, do you want to join us ? If not, shut the door and we can get on." The writer remembers a baptism taken by him at St. Mary's, of course on more formal lines, which was attended by seven or eight men from the branch, to whom he explained the service briefly as it proceeded, and who joined lustily in saying the godparents' responses.

His teaching about prayer at these times was based upon an absolute belief in God's power and care of the individual. If he could persuade any man to ask God for what he wanted, however material and elementary the request, he felt that a contact had been established between Father and child and that step by step, by answers obvious or subtle, the petitioner would begin to learn about God's dealings with man.

His character and powers were tested, perhaps, most drastically by a long and in the ordinary sense unsuccessful strike, which the branch undertook in 1938. It was fought to establish the right of the workpeople in a large and underpaid waste supply factory to join a union. The members concerned numbered a hundred and thirty, mostly men. They came out in protest against the dismissal of their shop stewards.

In the eight months it lasted, Hugh and his various committees and teams surpassed all previous efforts. They enlisted the active sympathy and help of neighbouring unions, enlightened the public with well-written leaflets, collected money to supplement the union's strike pay, and invented numerous ingenious methods of defence. The membership involved was, however, too small in proportion to the whole number employed for them to carry the day. "I am afraid God does not see eye to eye with me over this," Lister said of his prayers for victory. In the end he was cheered to find that it had been a moral triumph. Fired by their example, the workers in other firms became organized and their employers yielded them the right without protest. Even the recalcitrant firm raised the wages of its remaining employees. The effects of the struggle on public opinion were described by Hugh in an inimitable leaflet, "At the Four Ale Bar," which describes a conversation between neighbours in the local argot of the Wick. They conclude that a failure can be as useful as a success, if the spirit is right.

He made goodness irresistibly attractive, not least by his infectious high spirits and the ribald Cockney humour with which he made fun of everything and made everything good fun.

Can the lessons of all this be summed up? An attempt to summarize his methods of introducing Christianity to the workers would, perhaps, lay stress first on the need of efficient concentration on the evils at one's door, to fight the wolf in the sheep-fold, however arduous, unconventional and intimidating such a fight may be. His second counsel would be to learn the language, verbal and mental, of the men you want to reach, by living with them and identifying yourself with them in every way you can. Furthermore, to fight the evils above-mentioned, not for but with them, and to show them by example what difference Christianity may make in the stress and strain of practical life. Lastly, to adopt and develop their own traditions of Christian virtue and, most of all, that of the good fellowship of faithful friends.

That some such inspiring leadership is needed by the working class after the war becomes daily more obvious. The Labour Movement in all its phases needs the influence of men like Hugh Lister. It needs courage and audacity to transform industry into an organ of democratic community service. It needs a firm moral basis while making that transformation. It needs realism and humility, combined with high aims and confident faith. Lister's experience shows that Christians of his type can infuse the best traditions of the movement—those of brotherhood, courage and self-sacrificing devotion—with new vitality and power, and in doing so not only save the community at large from frustration, but induce individual souls to turn to the divine source of strength for themselves.

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